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16 October 1951

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Note: This memo. was

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

returned by

[Redacted Box]

SUBJECT: Letter from the Honorable J. Edgar Hoover, Director
Federal Bureau of Investigation, dated 27 September 1951

to form for clarification

of certain passages - This

The reference letter transmits information purporting to represent statements by a Soviet official stationed in Europe who, the informant believes, is an important functionary of the Soviet Ministry of State Security. This information deals with an alleged split in the Politburo between a war faction and a peace faction, and with the possible development of a "colossal thing" which the informant believes to be a super weapon. The Bureau advises that the informant has provided reliable and valuable information in the past.

Must memo.

It is difficult properly to evaluate the information without knowing more about both source and subsorce. Certain general comments, however, can be made.

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For more than a decade an outward appearance of unanimity has been maintained by the Politburo and it is, therefore, impossible to evaluate the various rumors of policy splits within this body. It is conceivable that a well-developed difference of opinion could exist over a protracted period, but regardless of whether Stalin "aligned" himself with the minority or majority, the split would always end at the moment when Stalin made his position known.

The Politburo is composed of individuals hand-picked by Stalin for both loyalty and ability, who owe their advancement to his favor alone and continue in office only under his sufferance. The best available reports on Politburo procedure indicate that, regardless of differences which may develop from the discussion of any problem, the matter is decided when Stalin renders final judgment. Stalin's word determines the party or governmental line, and the ranks are closed. Feuding cliques have never been tolerated by the Communist Party.

Malenkov undoubtedly is the most important individual under Stalin on Communist Party matters, and perhaps on internal affairs in general; Molotov, however, appears to outrank all others on foreign policy. It is believed that in event of Stalin's death, Molotov would be his titular successor, probably ruling through a triumvirate of Malenkov, Beriya and himself, and that there would be no immediate drastic changes in policy.

FBI ACTION COMPLETED

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

Memorandum for the Director

2

16 October 1951

Despite Malenkov's present stature, it is unlikely that any change of mind on his part would influence Stalin to the extent suggested by this report.

There are certain apparent contradictions in the information contained in the attached letter:

1. While the informant alleges that two-thirds of the Politburo favors war now with the United States, he adds that, "The Soviets have not given up the idea of peace, and if the Americans are earnest and the Soviets can believe the Americans, they still desire peace." The important point to be clarified here is the type of "peace" which the USSR theoretically desires. A "peace" to build up military might within the present boundaries or a "peace" (as opposed to total war) to continue the present policy of expansion are far more likely definitions than a real settlement of international problems and differences at this time. In this sense a preventive war would result only if the Politburo felt they could not obtain the type of "peace" suitable to their dynamic policy.
2. It is stated that the two-thirds majority favoring war now "do not desire to cause trouble in Europe, but are in favor of concentrating completely in the East . . ." There is a danger that this may be interpreted as favoring an extension of the present "cold" war rather than a desire for "hot" war. Of course this thought is somewhat superfluous since one could immediately lead to the other. In any case, the source states specifically that "two-thirds desire war now with the United States." It would seem that the most charitable interpretation of such a statement would be that the two-thirds are at least willing to risk war now by carrying out an even more aggressive policy than at present. However, the source continues, "Half of this group desires war because it is believed the USSR should not give the United States time to be prepared and that immediate war would result in defeat of the United States." This group (one-third of the Politburo) believes that they can win now, but it will be more difficult if possible later. Whether or not they consider the war as "preventive" is academic. If they consider war to be better now than later, they certainly disagree with the alleged Stalin opinion that the imperialistic world will swallow itself. Such a disagreement means that war in their opinion is certainly inevitable, and this does not mean simply an extension of the cold war.

The other one-third are "panicky," and feel war now would be better than waiting a year. This could not in any sense mean extension of the cold war.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

Memorandum for the Director

3

16 October 1951

The statement that this two-thirds group "do not desire to cause trouble in Europe but are in favor of concentrating completely in the East" is a seeming contradiction in the sense that hot war will certainly cause trouble in Europe. However, it could possibly be construed to mean that the East is where the USSR desires the real front of such a war to be located, and believes that in the East the potential number of western states willing to fight may be held at a minimum. It may well seem to the USSR that the Western offensive power capable of causing "trouble" in Europe is small with the possible exception of air capabilities. However, in any kind of "hot" war the Politburo must certainly expect all-out air attack, and be prepared to face this fact. From the source's statements it would appear that concentration in the East is simply for the reason he states, "This is where they can hurt North American interests most."

3. Furthermore, the informant's warning that, if the United States "keeps making trouble," Stalin will "consent to war" is particularly open to suspicion as a plant.

The "colossal thing" mentioned by the informant appears to be reminiscent of Hitler's "secret weapons." It may be intended to refer to more powerful weapons than atomic weapons. The Office of Scientific Intelligence, CIA, has no knowledge of a "colossal thing," as thus characterized, in preparation within the Soviet Union.

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KINGMAN DOUGLASS
Assistant Director
Current Intelligence

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